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**Re: Irradiation in the Production, Processing, and Handling of Food; 64 Fed. Reg. 7834
(February 17, 1999) [Docket No. 98N-1038]**

I am submitting these comments as an individual consumer who is concerned with the labeling of irradiated food. I stand in direct opposition to extremely powerful interests like the Grocery Manufacturers of America, but I nonetheless believe that my voice is valuable in our democracy.

The GMA is correct in noting that irradiation labels put off consumers. They claim that the labels look like a warning and thus consumers are misled to believe irradiated food should be avoided.

The GMA does not consider, however, that some consumers are understandably concerned about the trends that the factory farming industry is headed towards. I am personally against irradiation because it represents a technological solution to avoiding a larger problem.


The slaughtering of animals has historically often had important religious or moral restrictions to it. I do not personally hold to most of these, but I do believe some things are important:

- the animals deserve a humane lifestyle, including natural exercise and normal food, and
- the speed of the slaughtering process should not pass a point where it delivers tainted food products.

I believe that irradiation is another step to avoiding the necessary restraints that involves taking a life. To ensure untainted meat, conditions before life should be cleaner and conditions after death should also be cleaner. To do this, meat processing must become less "productive" and involve more "quality control." If the price of meat goes up, so be it – it will reflect the real cost of eating meat in our continually resource-strapped world.

I am not an extremist, and I am not calling for changing all the things I find wrong with the industry already. But I believe this measure to allow the irradiation of food to pass undetected is a definite entrenchment of values that I do not hold.

Thank you for your time,

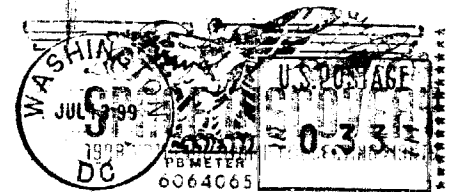


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